

Oral Questions

Mr. Broadbent: Why not just pack it in?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, the rules ask for me not to refer to a member by name. I do not remember the riding of every member in the House.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth.

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AIRPORTS**STATUS OF DORVAL AND MIRABEL AIRPORTS**

Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. He will know that Canada's two national air carriers do not want their domestic long haul operations moved to the Mirabel Taj Mahal airport. Any such decision by the government will not only be costly and inconvenient to the airlines, it will be disastrous to the Canadian consumer, and any shift will be done at the expense of the Dorval area as well. In view of that fact that there is a gang of 18 Quebec Liberal Members of Parliament, including three Cabinet ministers, who are pressuring the Minister of Transport to make up his mind, will he leave the Dorval-Mirabel matter at the status quo and remove the uncertainty faced by both airlines and passengers?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I was indeed aware of the fact that the carriers, united in the Air Transport Association of Canada, are unsympathetic to a move to Mirabel. I thank the hon. member for expressing the views of his party, as a whole, presumably, or are there other different views on the subject, and I will take them into account when I make a decision.

REQUEST THAT DECISION BE ANNOUNCED IN PARLIAMENT

Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth): Madam Speaker, can we get a commitment from the Minister of Transport that whatever decision he makes regarding a possible switch from Dorval to Mirabel will be announced while the House of Commons is sitting, and that he will not go the deplorable VIA Rail route and announce it during a recess? In addition, will the minister also table the comprehensive reports on the Dorval-Mirabel situation when he makes the decision so that the travelling public will know what motivated the government's resolution of this very important matter?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I am being more careful these days when I indicate dates for things I will do. I will not do so in this case. I want to assure the hon. member that when the decision is made it will

be announced and fully explained so that everyone will have a chance to take a whack at it.

Mr. Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth): Here, in the House?

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[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORT**STATUS OF OFFERS BY FOREIGN AIR COMPANIES ON USE OF MIRABEL AS DISTRIBUTION CENTRE**

Mr. Yves Demers (Duvernay): Madam Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of Transport. Early in 1979, at meetings the members for Laval and the northern Montreal area had with senior officials of the Department of Transport, the latter said that they were in favour of transferring all flights from Dorval to Mirabel, because if there was a transfer, foreign airlines, and more specifically the Japanese, would be inclined to make Mirabel the distribution centre for their air freight to North and South America. This would, of course, give a considerable boost to the economy and the metropolitan area. Would the airlines in question still be willing to do so?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I would really need a map to visualize the distances involved, for instance, from Japan to South America. However, I would say that a distinction should be made between two kinds of air freight. There is specialized air freight, and from that point of view, there is no real advantage in transferring carriers from Dorval to Mirabel, since the Japanese could very well come to Mirabel without going anywhere else or they could use it as a stopover en route to other countries. However, in another scenario, carriers specialized in Japanese air freight would come to Mirabel and then rely on Mirabel to forward their cargo to other Canadian airports. In that case, of course, a transfer of all routes to Mirabel would possibly offer a number of advantages.

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[English]

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS**ANNOUNCEMENT OF LAY-OFFS**

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Madam Speaker, yesterday the CNR announced that it would be shutting down its main repair shops in Transcona, Point St. Charles, and Moncton for some six to eight weeks over and above the usual four-week shutdown. These lay-offs will affect 3,150 families across the system. Does the minister approve of this decision to have the CNR outdo the CPR by shutting down for an even longer period of time, or will he tell the CNR today that this